

SEPTEMBER 26,1985

The Shortgrass Country cattle market showed a bit of spark last week. At the special sale on Monday, we sold a load of steer calves at \$57. In the previous week, I'd already slid a little bunch of heifers in at four-bits a pound.

Unlike the other herders and forever displeased bankers, I wasn't so downhearted over showing a 40 45 percent loss on the calves. I look on cattle as an extravagance. Hollow horns, to me are like blowing a big roll on an evening on the town, or splurging for a trinket that's far over priced.

Last summer I played with the idea of trying to go into commercial cattle raising. I'd heard the term at bull sales and seen it in advertisements in association magazines. I couldn't get the hang of it. I toyed with selling hides and mounting horns for hat racks, but I couldn't find anything to do with our cows that met my definition of "commercial."

My best guess is. that the ones who continually complain about the condition of the cattle market are the ones who have kept on putting too much of their own money into the trade. Back in the good old days when drafts of cattle often broke even, there were lots of ranchers and jugkeepers who didn't have one good word to say about cattle raising. I can remember when we were holding our ground for the first time after that big wreck in '73, I overheard the same spoil sports and soreheads that were screaming to far horizons when the market crashed bellowing into outer space for relief from the cow market.

I tell you who I think is to blame for the eternal grief of the cattle people; they are the bankers and loan companies for not steering us into safer investments. With all those charts and graphs and advisory services they have at their disposal, by now they could have directed us into something useful like running roadside stands, or opening community workshops to teach wives how to be teachers' aides. You can't tell me that a big banking system like ours can't stop corrupting their customers with stocker calf paper and wild card cattle bargaining schemes. I'll just go down for the record right now that I'm plenty disappointed in them for letting us persuade them to perpetuate this wreck, and the next time I have any cash, I may just keep it at home in a shoe bag.

The 1985 calf crop has sure been a heavy one. Calves and their mommas have put on a lot of weight on the green grass. I wish I understood the commercial aspects of the game. It looks like with so much data available, someone would be able to explain it.